115 to write down the authorised version of whatever ceremonies it was
184 that I wished to describe. Moreover they warned me not only that customs differed slightly from clan to clan and location to location in North and Central Kavirondo, but that the Loo who had crossed the Gulf and gone to live in South Kavirondo differed in a good many ways from the Loo who had remained on the north side of the water. It must therefore be understood that the customs which I am about to describe are those of a group of Loo clans living in a small area in Central Kavirondo, and that there may be discrepancies between my account of these customs and those of other observers in other parts of the tribal area.

II. The Marriage Customs.

582 In the old days, before the Europeans took over the government
721 of the Loo country, it seems that a man did not normally marry until he was nearer forty than thirty, and girls did not marry until they were nineteen or twenty. In the case of a man this delay was apparently connected with his duties as a warrior. It was considered that a man fought better if he were free from the ties of married life. Though the Loo were never a fighting tribe in the grand manner like the Masai they had for some hundreds of years been pressing southwards through the surrounding Bantu tribes. Raiding for fresh land or even for cattle alone, and the consequent reprisals on the part of the raided, played an important part in tribal life, and every able-bodied man from the age of seventeen or eighteen up to the time of his marriage had to hold himself in constant readi-
• 581 ness for a scrap. The term for a man of fighting age was nyowe,
885 that for a married man jait, while that for a man who delayed to marry until much later than usual was nyawombo. After marriage a man seems to have been exempt from all warlike duties and allowed to settle down and devote himself entirely to his family life.

582 It is likely that this postponement of marriage to a comparatively
915 late age was, apart from its connection with the defence of the tribe, an instance of the reluctance of the older men to surrender even a part of their wealth and power to their sons. A man could not marry without his father's permission, for it was only from his father (except under special circumstances into which I need not enter here) that he could obtain the cattle with which to acquire a bride, and primitive fathers are often no more anxious than some civilised ones to part with large quantities of their worldly goods for the benefit of their children. There was, however, no hard and fast convention as to the age at which a man might marry. Circumstances altered cases. A mother, for instance, who was without an unmarried daughter, and who wanted another woman to help her in the household work and cultivation, might insist that her son should bring a wife into the family, even if he had not yet reached ordinary marriageable age. Again if there